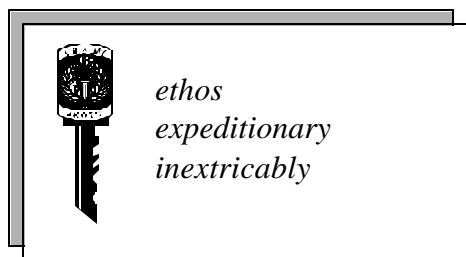


LESSON 6: THE U.S. MARINE CORPS



INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Marine Corps is a component of the Department of the Navy and, as such, is under the operational control of the Secretary of the Navy. However, since the Marine Corps is responsible for its own administration, discipline, and training, it is in actuality an independent branch of the U.S. Armed Forces. A commandant, appointed by the president, heads the Marine Corps. The commandant usually serves four years and holds the rank of General.

The Marine Corps has been an important part of America's defense since its founding in 1775. Although usually associated with the missions of "the fleet," it is often assigned missions unrelated to naval operations such as in the Korean and Vietnam conflicts.

BACKGROUND

On November 10, 1775, the Continental Congress passed a resolution stating, "two battalions of Marines be raised" for service as landing forces with the fleet. This resolution, sponsored by John Adams, established the Continental Marines and marked the official birthday of the Marine Corps. Serving on land and at sea, these first Marines distinguished themselves in a number of operations, including their first amphibious raid in New Providence, Bahamas, on March 3, 1776.

Throughout the American Revolutionary War, the need arose for a regularly organized corps of specially trained sharpshooters, and the Continental Marines answered that call. When the *Treaty of Paris* in April 1783 brought an end to the Revolutionary War and as the last of the Navy's ships were sold, the Continental Navy and Marines went out of existence. Congress did not formally reestablish the Marine Corps until July 11, 1798.

In the years following its reestablishment, a small force of Marines participated in the war with the Barbary pirates and, in 1805, took part in the capture of an "Old World" fortress at Derne, Tripoli. As a result of this action, the inscription "*To the Shores of Tripoli*" was added to the Colors of the Corps.

Following Tripoli, a small detachment of Marines numbering 10 officers and 483 enlisted men took part in the War of 1812, America's first major conflict with Britain since the Revolutionary War. Since then, the Marine Corps has participated in all of the actions of the Navy and with the Army in times of war. A well-known military saying is "*the marines have landed, and the situation is well in hand.*" Marines have been the first to fight in almost every major war of the United States and they have made more than 300 landings on foreign shores.

MISSIONS

Since the creation of the Marine Corps over 200 years ago, the duties and missions of the Marines have changed. The original duties of the Marines involved firing their weapons from the tops of masts, manning the guns, keeping order on board ships, and providing personnel for landing parties. As seen in these examples, the mission of the Marine Corps was of an amphibious nature. It was not until the Second Seminole War in 1835 that the Marines saw their first duty as an **expeditionary** force.

The present-day mission of the Marine Corps is to *“Make Marines and Win Battles.”* Having a well-defined strategic concept is vital to accomplishing this mission and to ensuring that the Corps properly organizes, equips, and trains its forces. In addition to this enduring concept, the Marine Corps also performs one other function: *“such other duties as the President may direct.”* This task has historically kept the Corps the busiest and requires that Marines be ready for commitment across the full spectrum of operations.

STRATEGIC CONCEPT

Influenced by early U.S. defeats in the Korean War, the U.S. Congress in 1952 provided a clear and strategic concept for the Marine Corps that is as relevant today as it was then. This strategic concept states that the Marine Corps must be:

- ✓ A versatile, expeditionary force in readiness.
- ✓ A balanced force for a naval campaign and a ground and air striking force.
- ✓ Always at a high state of readiness.
- ✓ Ready to suppress or contain international disturbances short of war.
- ✓ Most ready when the nation is least ready.

TASKS IN SUPPORT OF THE NAVY

The Marine Corps is at all times subject to the laws and regulations established for the Department of the Navy, except when attached to another branch of the Service by order of the president. Since the responsibilities of the Marine Corps include the seizure or defense of advanced naval bases and the conduct of land operations associated with naval campaigns or other operations, the Marines have four distinct tasks in support of the U.S. Navy:

- To maintain a mobile force in immediate readiness as a part of the fleet for use in operations involving shore objectives.
- To maintain Marine detachments as a part of the ship's crew on cruisers, aircraft carriers, and battleships.
- To provide garrisons that safeguard Navy yards and naval stations at home and in outlying possessions of the United States.
- To provide forces for the protection of American lives and property abroad (for example, at U.S. embassies).

ATTRIBUTES

From these missions, concepts, and tasks emerge an institutional **ethos** marked by four unique attributes that distinguish the Marine Corps from the other Services. These four attributes are:

- *Combined Arms in Three Dimensions.* The Marine Corps is the only Service tasked by Congress to be able to operate combined arms in three dimensions: air, land, and sea. The requirement for mutually supporting multi-

dimensional operations demands a self-contained — and self-sustained — air-ground fighting force.

- *Every Marine a Rifleman.* Although the Marine Corps is a multi-dimensional force, Marines share this attribute as a common operational philosophy. In other words, every Marine, regardless of specialty, is fundamentally the same. All are forged from a common experience, share a common set of values, and are trained as a cohesive air-ground team from the moment they join the Corps.
- *Task Organized.* The Marine Corps employs a versatile and flexible organizational approach by task, organizing air-ground task forces in order to tailor them to the problem at hand. In this way, the Corps can emphasize whatever capability it needs to accomplish the task at hand — combat or support, land or air, light or heavy.
- *Soldiers of the Sea.* Marine Corps operations are **inextricably** linked with those of the U.S. Navy. For most of our country's history, integrated Navy-Marine expeditionary forces have been routinely forward deployed around the world. As a result, the Corps possesses extraordinary strategic reach and its daily operations touch the majority of the world's populations.

ORGANIZATION

The Commandant of the Marine Corps is an executive assistant to the Secretary of the Navy, serves as the Navy Secretary's principal adviser on Marine matters, and represents the Marine Corps on the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The Commandant of the Marine Corps is responsible for the discipline and general efficiency of the Corps. Since the Marine Corps is normally the first U.S.

military force to land on enemy soil, the *National Security Act* of 1947 required that the Corps have no less than three combat divisions and three air wings, plus service and support units as needed.

OPERATING FORCES

Operating Forces account for almost two-thirds of the entire Marine Corps. They consist of the Fleet Marine Forces, marines aboard ships, and security forces. The Fleet Marine Forces make up the Corps' combat units and form parts of the Atlantic and Pacific Fleets. These combat units operate as air-ground teams.

One division and wing team is based on the East Coast of the United States, another is on the West Coast, and the third is in the Far East and Hawaii. The teams are kept combat ready at all times. A fourth division and wing team, composed of elements of the Marine Corps Reserve, is prepared to reinforce the active forces when needed. Marines are also used for security forces onboard ships and in naval stations and bases. These tasks and functions contribute to the successful development of an efficient fighting force.

Fleet Marine Forces

The main operating units of the U.S. Marine Corps are the two Fleet Marine Forces: the Fleet Marine Force Atlantic and the Fleet Marine Force Pacific. These forces are a part of the Operating Forces of the U.S. Navy. They are used in the seizure and defense of advanced naval bases. These Fleet Marine Forces may also be used in other land operations necessary for the successful completion of a naval campaign. A Fleet Marine Force consists of headquarters, service and support units, one or more Marine divisions or brigades, and one or more Marine aircraft wings.

Marine Expeditionary Forces

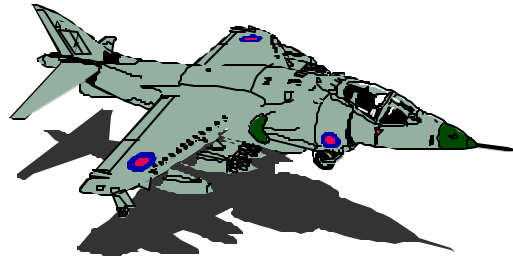
The Marine Expeditionary Force is used in the majority of situations involving sustained combat. The basic parts of a Marine Expeditionary Force are a Marine division and an aircraft wing. A Marine division has the necessary armor, artillery, and other support elements assigned to it. The Corps also has amphibious armored personnel carriers, a wide range of artillery, and anti-aircraft weapons available to support its operations. If the need arises, it can provide forces for airborne operations.

Marine Expeditionary Units (MEUs)

The Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) is an intervention force with the ability to rapidly organize for combat operations in virtually any environment. The MEU brings all the supplies it needs to sustain itself for quick mission accomplishment or to pave the way for any follow-on forces. With a strength of about 2,200 personnel, the MEU is normally built around a reinforced battalion, a composite aircraft squadron, and a service support group. The MEU is commanded by a colonel and is deployed on up to four naval amphibious ships.

The ground combat team is the battalion's landing team — it is an infantry battalion reinforced with artillery, amphibious assault vehicles, light armored reconnaissance assets, and other units as the mission requires.

The aviation combat element is a Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron augmented with four types of helicopters into a composite squadron including light aircraft such as "Hueys" and "Super Cobras," medium lift "Sea Knights," and heavy lift "Super Stallions." Its assets may also include fixed-wing aircraft such as the AV-8B Harrier (pictured here) — a highly versatile aircraft used only by the Marines within the U.S. Armed Forces.



The combat service support element in the MEU is formed primarily from force service support group assets. It contains all the logistics specialists necessary to keep the MEU's organic equipment functioning. Also included in this element are medical, dental, maintenance, engineering, and other technical experts.

The MEU's command element provides command and control of the elements discussed above. It includes specialized detachments that provide naval gunfire liaison, reconnaissance and surveillance, and specialized communications and electronics warfare capabilities.

SUPPORT ESTABLISHMENT

The Supporting Establishment provides administrative, supply, training, and recruiting support for the operating forces. Marine Corps education and training programs are expanding into the use of simulation, virtual reality, and warfighting games to make training more effective. A separate Marine Corps University manages a mix of resident and correspondence courses designed to challenge and stimulate the minds of Marines of all ranks. The Corps has two centers that handle recruit training located at San Diego, California, and Parris Island, South Carolina.

MARINE CORPS RESERVES

There are two functions of the Marine Corps that help it to prepare for emergencies. The

first of these is the maintenance of a reserve force. The purpose of maintaining a reserve force is to provide and train units and qualified individuals to be available for active duty in the Marine Corps in a time of war or national emergency. The second function is that the Marine Corps must be ready to expand and mobilize at a moment's notice. To become mobilized means to become assembled or organized, as for war in this case. The Marine Corps is able to respond quickly because it can be carried to any coastal area in the world by Navy ships. The reserves insure that in the event of an emergency, mobilization and expansion can take place quickly and efficiently.

The Marine Corps Reserve was authorized by Congress as a reserve force to be trained in time of peace, and to be called into active service only when the nation is at war, or when there exists a national emergency as declared by the president. The Marine Corps Reserve consists of the Standby Marine Corps Reserve and the Individual Ready Reserve.

TRADITION

The Marine Corps adopted its emblem in 1868. Its design — credited to Jacob Zeilin, the Commandant of the Marine Corps — has remained nearly unchanged over the years. The emblem consists of the eagle, globe, and anchor, symbolizing the air, land, and sea aspects of the Marine Corps operational environment. In that same year, the Marine Corps' Hymn was first heard, but no author is credited. The first line of the Hymn contains the stirring words, *"From the Halls of Montezuma to the Shores of Tripoli."*

In 1883, the Marine Corps adopted its motto that still exists today, *"Semper Fidelis"* (or "always faithful"), replacing other well-known motto's such as *"Fortitudine"* (used in the early 1800s) and *"By Sea and By Land"* (adopted in

1876). In 1888, John Phillip Sousa composed the Corps' march, "Semper Fidelis," while serving as leader of the Marine Corps band. Today, this band is called *"The President's Own"* because it plays for state affairs in the White House. The official colors of the Marine Corps are scarlet and gold.

The core values of the Marine Corps are *Honor, Courage, and Commitment*. These values are at the very soul of the Marine Corps institution and they frame the way that Marines live and act.

INNOVATIONS

The Marine Corps has a rich tradition of experimenting with new concepts and technologies, which include the following:

- ❑ 1920s and 1930s — Developed amphibious doctrine that was key to winning the war in the Pacific and in Western Europe.
- ❑ 1930s and 1940s — Perfected close air support.
- ❑ 1950s — Pioneered the use of the helicopter, revolutionizing battlefield tactical mobility and operations.
- ❑ 1970s — Pioneered the use of Vertical/ Short Takeoff and Landing Aircraft, providing quick response close air support to front-line troops.
- ❑ 1980s and 1990s — Introduced global pre-positioning of equipment on ships, allowing for more rapid response to crises around the world.
- ❑ 1990s — Formed the Chemical/Biological Incident Response Force, providing the United States with a better ability to respond to consequences of chemical-biological terrorism.

- ❑ 1990s — Established Sea Dragon, a new Warfighting Laboratory that is responsible for developing and field-testing future operational and technological concepts.